1; Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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All that has been described took place for four successive days. While it is not clearly so stated, it seems likely that the four nights on which medicine was given to the dancers' wives constituted the four-days' period of painting and dancing. On the fourth day, after the dancing, certain special spectacular ceremonies were gone through, analogous to those which in all the succeeding dances terminated the ceremony. In this dance, however, a second period of four days, in which the dancers acted in their assumed capacity of being crazy or foolish, followed these spectacular ceremonies of the fourth day. 796

On this fourth day, two prominent chiefs, noted for their success in war, were selected. They held bared knives, and two tent-poles were brought to them. Each of them recounted four of his most distinguished coups. They then cut up the tent-poles into small pieces, and piled them up at the fireplace of the lodge and set them on fire. The flames blazed up high, while the dancers stood north and south of the fire with their "grandfathers" and danced. The fire was kept up and tended so that all the wood would be simultaneously consumed. The dancers' relatives held them by the hair or body, wherever they could seize them, while the dancers stood like horses trying to break loose, and blew their whistles. Each tried to be the first to rush into the fire. They seem to have moved toward the fire four times without entering it. The fourth time, at a signal, they were released, and rushed into the fire, dancing and stamping it with their bare feet until they had put it out. Medicine was put on the skin, and no one is said to have been burned; but men have fainted in the fire. One informant, who said that he had been the first to jump into the fire, stated that the soles of his feet became very hot, but that his skin was not burned. [554] [789]

After the fire had been put out, the dancers went to their "grandfathers," who prayed over their bows, put medicine on them, and gave them to the young men. The old men then sang and the dancers marched around in a circle for four songs. At the end of the last song, they ran out of the lodge, racing to a monument, which had been erected by the young men of other companies, at some distance to the southeast, and back again to the lodge. As they returned, each passed between two men standing near the entrance of the lodge, to whom he gave his bow as he ran between them. One of these two men was the tallest man that could be secured; the other was as short as possible. One of them took the bows of the tall division of dancers; the other, of the short division. It is said that these two men received bows until they had a large armful, but that they never made a mistake in taking a bow from a man of the other division. It appears, however, that the racers carried their bows in their right or left 796 526

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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men are named, their female relatives return to their tents, and cook. When they have prepared food, they all together bring a large quantity of it to the lodge. The men selected carry weapons, and are dressed for war. They are usually mounted. Where they themselves or their horses were wounded, they paint themselves. If they have ridden over an enemy, a man is painted on the breast of the horse. When the food which has been brought by their female relatives has been eaten, these men, two at a time, go through numerous performances of their achievements in battle. This is done each day of the dance.

A group of men and women, called, like those in the preliminary singing-tent, "prairie-chickens," and therefore probably the same persons, seem to be the singers for the dance. They beat a rawhide in place of a drum, and hold branches, which, at the end of each song, they shake, shouting.

The dancers may not drink water, no matter how great the heat. If one of them is unable to endure, and a pitying relative gives him even only a drop, a thunderstorm follows, and the offender may be struck by lightning, or one of his horses may be killed by lightning. In case it seems necessary for the dancers to drink, a pipe is taken to one of the old men. If he accepts it and smokes it, he goes to the central tree. He wears a robe with the hair-side out. He has a whistle in his mouth, feathers in one hand, and a crow-skin in the other. He strikes the bill of the crow four times, with a downward motion, against the lightning symbol on the tree. A vessel is held against the tree at the bottom of the symbol, and, after the fourth blow, water is said to run out until the vessel is filled, when it stops. This water is given to the dancers, each of whom drinks a very small quantity. The actions of the man producing this water are said to be determined by his personal supernatural vision.

After the four days of the ceremony are completed, the lodge is left standing. All the cloth and clothing that have been attached to it remain in place, and it appears that other clothes, especially of children, are left at the lodge. This is done in order that the children may live a long life.

From drawings made by a Gros Ventre, it appears that the buffalo-skull is painted with spots, and has its nose and eyes stuffed. Behind it is represented a dancer holding the wheel. He is presumably the pledger of the ceremony. The wheel is bisected by two strings, and has eagle-feathers and down-feathers attached to it. The dancer blows a whistle at the end of which is a plume. The whistle hangs from his neck. At the back of the head is a plume. Lines of paint proceed from his breast to his wrists and ankles. On each of these are four diamonds, two on each upper and lower arm, thigh, and calf. If this is a correct representation, the Gros Ventre use at least one style of painting that is like the most typical Arap-

842 [787] pressed this desire early in life and volunteered the following story of her experience.

[587] "My first husband, Dressed in White, went out hunting and brought back a lot of buffalo meat. I had my robe spread out just inside the door and he threw all the meat on it. Being hungry, I sat down there and was just about to eat the raw liver when he said: 'Wait! Don't eat that.' When I asked why not, he countered with the query: 'Do you like children?' To which I replied: 'You know I love children. I go wherever there is a baby—I love to have them on my lap.' So he said: 'Well, it is your fault that this is going to happen.' He took the oval piece of meat from the upper front quarter and roasted it in the coals. He then threw it to me in a careless way, instead of passing it to me as usual, and said: 'Here, you can have that for your son. You eat this plain—don't eat any tallow with it.' although they usually ate tallow with such lean meat. I said in disgust: 'E:ka:kya! I have always liked children,' and flung the meat out of the door. He said: 'Now that you have done this, you are going to have children from now on.' So, as he predicted, not long after that I became pregnant with my firstborn who was a boy. Unfortunately this boy died and I often wondered if it happened because I threw the meat too violently on that occasion when my husband had offered me the opportunity to choose whether or not I wished to bear children." Incidentally she remarked many times that she is happy she chose as she did,—otherwise now she would be all alone and her children have been so good to her.

The telling of the above incident brought to Coming Daylight's mind another, which confirms her belief in the relation between [595] "medicine" and conception. "Crow Bull, my mother's brother, [582] had four wives. His first wife did not have any children. Then he married an Assiniboine woman and still later took a third wife. Neither of the latter had children either until one time Crow Bull got mad. His third wife wanted to leave him for another man, but her relatives sent her back to Crow Bull. He, however, slept across from her bed and did not have intercourse with her. Shortly after this the Assiniboine woman did something to dis- [789] please him and so he made up his mind: 'These two wives of mine are going to have children and settle down!' He had an old-fash-

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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ioned doll which he wrapped up like a sack-baby and, one night without letting her know what he was doing, he raised up the covers on his third wife's bed and put this doll under her. He did the same with the Assiniboine woman and said: 'She will have a boy, too.' As he had predicted, each bore him a son, and these two are the only children Crow Bull had. He later gave this doll to one of his niece's daughters, having 'sterilized' the doll first, however, so that the girl was not affected and subsequently gave birth to five children."

Natural sterility was apparently not recognized by the Gros Ventres. If a couple was childless it was assumed that contraceptive medicines were used. While many individuals did not approve of the use of these medicines, each family had the right to do as it pleased in this matter without outside interference. Nevertheless, The Boy, alarmed at the falling birthrate which he attributed to the widespread use of these old-fashioned medicines, on two occasions in 1921 and 1922 spoke out boldly in public about the matter. He feels he was justified in doing so since he thinks there has been an improvement in the situation.

Although the use of these medicines was rated by our informants as the major factor in accounting for the small number of children per family, infant mortality was said to have been high, and infanticide was known.

For premature infants nothing could be done in the days before hospital care was known. Furthermore, where marked physical defects were obvious at birth, the chances that the infant would live were slight. It was stated, for instance, in regard to one woman who gave birth to a "little dog," that "had she been alone she would have done away with it, but her husband prevented her from doing so and everybody thought it was awful." Coming Daylight and Singer knew of two other actual instances of deformity,—one child who "looked like a beaver," and another who had "ears like a rabbit"—and both of these died shortly after birth. Coming Daylight remarked: "It seems as though we are so foolish the way we are ashamed of being deformed. One time when we were in town a white woman, whose face was quite disfigured, came into a restaurant where we were. My daughter told me: 'They [the whites] don't think anything of it. It can't be

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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857 buffalo cow, dried and stuffed. This type they would bounce and
526 kick. A popular game played among girls in spring was as follows. The girls holding hands formed a big ring. One girl in the center would have a ball. She would throw it at anyone in the ring. When she hit her chosen victim on the chest with the ball, the girls let go of each other's hands and each ran for a piece of buffalo chip where she would be "safe."[1]

A game played by boys and girls together in the evening was as follows. The children would line up according to size behind the tallest boy who would have in his hand a stick which was smouldering at the end. Each child held on tightly to the one in front of him. The boy holding the stick would try to touch the smallest child at the end of the line. The line would writhe as big sparks would fly and sometimes hair got singed. One old woman, recalling this game, remarked: "I don't know when we would get to bed, we had such a good time!"

Sometimes the children would send one of the group on an er-
857 rand. Those who stayed behind would wet their hands with their
524 tongues and say: "We will watch this to see if it takes you a long time or not." If their hands were still wet when the member of the group returned, they decided that he had done the errand very quickly.

When there were pretty clouds in the sky a little girl might point one out to the other children and tell them to watch it. Then she would stand at the bank of the river, bending over at the waist and violently flinging her arms from side to side while sing-
[821 ing. The others would watch the cloud and tell her that it was dis-
789] appearing and soon it would be gone. "They used to think they could make the cloud disappear by singing that song."

If a group of girls were playing together and some one boy, say
[576] from seven to nine years old, would butt in, the girls would all sit down to show that they resented the intrusion. If the boy did not leave, the girls would then form a circle around him and sing a derisive song. Thus the boy would be shamed and run off. The opportunity for this did not occur very often, since boys from about the age of seven usually went off to be by themselves

[1] For description of ball games and illustration of type of football, see Kroeber, 1908, fig. 23.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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the door." Deer then in both hands held the sinew stretched taut horizontally over a smoldering chip and sang a song special to this rite, ending it with a recitative "Yo!" Then he lowered the sinew and repeated the song and "Yo," then lowered still more and repeated, concluding with "Yo, ho, ho, ho!" and finally put the sinew on the burning chip. As the sinew burned and buckled, the pup doubled up with cramps and died.

Another power, conferred for use by the keeper in case of disrespect committed against him, worked by "contagious" magic. The keeper watched the offender closely and made sure to locate his tracks, and then took out of the pipe bundle and put on his ritual moccasins the soles of which had been rubbed during the transfer rite with the poisonous wild parsley. Then, wearing the moccasins he stepped in the offender's tracks. As soon as he did so, the offender got a fit and then his legs and feet became weak and wobbly and nobody but the keeper could cure him.

The co-keeper for the same punitive purpose in case of disrespect or molestation carried wild parsley mixed with peppermint leaves in the sack attached to her belt, but we obtained no information on the precise procedure she used.

Two punitive procedures were told The Boy by his father but without full details. These "vulgar" powers were not broadcast but were kept more or less secret within the inner circle of the Flat Pipe.

If a woman disrespected a keeper or caused him great embarrassment, he carried out a special rite over or toward her, obliged her to submit to sex intercourse with him, and afterwards carried out a concluding rite. If some young man went so far as to flirt with her, make advances and touch her, he would get ill, and she alone could doctor him back to health. If he went so far as to have sexual intercourse with her, he would probably die.

As regards all the foregoing punitive and harming powers, it was strictly understood that the keeper and co-keeper were given them to use only to enforce respect, and that if used for other and evil purposes the users would pay dearly and would be punished in some way, through the death of their children or through other misfortune.

Besides these supernatural powers to command respect, other

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793 powers, intended more for the positive advantage of the keeper or
795 his people, were customarily acquired during or after the transfer rite.

In the transfer rite the new keeper was taught how to doctor, especially in cases of fits, spasms and cramps. The peppermint [778] beverage, now used by everybody for these maladies, was formerly a monopoly of the Flat Pipe keeper in his curing practice. Other doctoring powers were also conferred on him and he could use the hair rope from the Flat Pipe bundle as a potent medicine to cure with, but we could obtain no details on these points.

The keeper would pray to have good dreams and might sleep [787] on the Pipe bed for the same purpose. His dreams, when told, were important news for his fellows, as through them the future could be foretold.

789 The keeper was also given power to summon, call or "snare"
793 from a distance, enemies or reluctant friends. The Boy gave two instances of the use of this power, both from the lips of his father, Lame Bull. When Lame Bull, on learning of his election as Flat Pipe keeper fled to the hills, the ex-keeper so summoned him, using the Flat Pipe itself in the rite. The nine Flat Pipe songs were sung and at the end of each, the ex-keeper holding the Pipe at arm's length in both hands with the stem pointed upward and outward, sang the Hair Rope song, then twisted the stem tip in a vertical near-circle first upward and outward and then inward and downward in a sort of beckoning motion as if drawing something toward him, then downward and finally lowered the bowl toward (or to?) the ground.

On a later occasion during Lame Bull's keepership, on a war [726] expedition against the Piegan he learned in a dream where they were located and was told that five of them would be killed. The night before the attack on the Piegan, using a common pipe and the above calling rite, thrice performed, with the pipe stem pointed toward the distant Piegan camp, invisible at the time to the Gros Ventre party, and singing the Hair Rope song, he "called" five of the Piegan, who, separated from the main Piegan body, were killed by the Gros Ventres.

793 The keeper and co-keeper also were given power to use in hunt-
224 ing buffalo, but we were able to obtain no details on the rite. The

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one occasion for which we obtained the account of Lame Bull's 224
resort to this power, it failed to work.

The keeper likewise received power to use in case his horse 793
played out during a war raid. In the 1868 battle with the Piegan, 926
Lame Bull's horse stepped into a hole and fell at a moment when 789
he was surrounded by Piegan. Two young Gros Ventre warriors, sons-in-law of Lame Bull, came to him. His horse got up but could not run, and in fact fell again. One of the young warriors said to him: "I thought the Flat Pipe was everything. Why don't you save yourself. The Piegan will kill all three of us." Lame Bull, keeper at the time, took some peppermint from the small bag tied to his whip, put it in his mouth, sang a certain song, spat on his hands, stroked his whip handle three times with his palm, made motions three times as if striking his horse, and the third time actually struck the horse. At this, the horse came to life as if fresh and started running, and Lame Bull got home safely.

Still another power conferred on the keeper was that of get- 793
ting possession of a horse by obtaining a single hair thereof. 789
Horses entered into the Feathered Pipe complex, not into the Flat Pipe one. But the Flat Pipe keeper could not be refused a request for a horse or horses made by him of anyone. Moreover, even though he did not directly make such a request, if he wanted a certain good horse, he could ask one of his relatives or good friends, surreptitiously and preferably by night, to pluck one hair from the horse's tail and bring it to him. The keeper would then perform some rite (details not obtainable by us) over the hair and put the hair in the Flat Pipe bundle, and pretty soon he would acquire the desired horse. It may be added that when the keeper walked near or around anybody's horse, he was watched suspiciously for fear that unobserved he would pluck a hair from the horse's tail.

In addition to these specific supernatural powers, the keeper and 793
co-keeper were given a great number of ritual powers, the right and duty to carry out certain ceremonies directly or indirectly related to the Pipe and its keepership. These will be described later under "Ritual."

In accordance with their sacred office and eminent dignity, with their role as benevolent intercessors for the people with the super-

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was, primarily though not exclusively, a prayer for rain and for protection against storms. Many other simpler rites were, however, carried out for the same purposes.

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Rain could be caused by sprinkling the Feathered Pipe keeper with water or by throwing water on him, and if the keeper, contrary to rule, bathed in a stream rain would follow. The keeper could also cause rain by prayer (details not known to our informant, The Boy) and then taking water in his mouth and, facing to the northwest (from which storms usually come) or against the wind, blowing the water out of his mouth in a spray. The keeper could also, according to Al Chandler, bring rain by spurting water out of his mouth or by sprinkling water from a cup, in each case in the four cardinal directions.

The keeper might have power, too, to cause rain by going to a creek, with prayers on the way, and wading in it with his moccasins on. But not all keepers had this power. On one occasion while Curly Head was keeper, a big prairie fire was spreading close to his place and Al Chandler, Al's father-in-law, and Curly Head were fighting the fire. Al's father-in-law saw Curly Head wade in the water and said to Al: "I guess he is trying to make rain. I see him walking in the water with moccasins on." But the old man "thought Curly Head did not have the power and sure enough he could not make it rain."

There were ways of stopping as well as causing rain. Al Chandler gave the following account. "The Feathered Pipe was used mainly to get rain. But it was also used to stop rain when there was danger that it would ruin crops or otherwise harm the people, and they would ask the keeper to stop it. He would not do this alone but would get some of the old men who understood about the Pipe to help him. They all sang and smudged themselves, but did not unwrap the Pipe or do anything else but sing and pray. The ceremony lasted quite long. I remember once, when Logan was agent, we were going down to a Fourth of July celebration and were camped over at Three Mile Coulee. While on our way to the coulee it started to rain and by the time we reached it, it was raining very, very hard. The horses were shaking with cold, lightning was flashing and thunder was sounding. Somebody asked Sitting High, then keeper, to do something, else their fun would

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789 be spoiled. Sitting High told him to summon the other old men. I could not stay in the tent with them although I was living with Sitting High at the time. Sitting High and his wife were there; so were the other old men, but not their wives. They started singing about three or four o'clock in the afternoon and kept it up all night. I woke up very early next morning and could hear them still singing. They were then just about breaking up. They had to see the ceremony through. They would sing four songs and smudge and smoke and talk. Then they would sing four more and rest between each four until they had sung 44 songs. Sure enough it cleared up the next day."

[361] A rite for stopping floods was described as follows by Jim Shortman: "One whole winter the Gros Ventres camped on the Musselshell River until spring. When the ice would go out the water would flood the valley from hill to hill, and all the camps, set up in the timber along the river for shelter, would move. My father, then Feathered Pipe keeper, did not move, and his wife said to him: "We will be flooded. What will you do?" "We will stay here," he said. "It is too much trouble to move." She told him: "We will be drowned." But he said: "No." That night he took down one of his little bags, which contained a hand-made wooden bowl. He took out the bowl, made a smudge, smudged the bowl and sang and talked to him, and after that went outside the lodge. I followed him out to see what he would do. He walked right out to the river which was rising and stopped about 8 or 10 feet from the water. He held the bowl up towards heaven, sang and talked [prayed, evidently], then lowered it first in the three stages, and at the fourth set it on the ground face down. Then he went back to his lodge. And, don't you know, the water was all around everywhere else, but did not come any closer to the spot where he put the bowl. Gosh, I was scared. I thought we would all drown. But when I got up the next morning the water was all around us, but we were all right."

Various ritual procedures were used by the Feathered Pipe keeper to avert or to stop thunderstorms. He would go out and stand, facing the oncoming storm. He would then stretch out his arms straight from the shoulder with his palms together. Then he would move his arms outward at the same time turning his

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palms outward (about as in the breast stroke for swimming), and while doing so would say: "We don't need you now. Go this way. Go this way." And the thunderclouds would spread and separate, and miss the camp. 789 ●

Once when Thick's brother, Horse Capture, had vowed a Crazy Dance and it was about to start, a big electric storm threatened. So Horse Capture filled a pipe and went to Bull Lodge and said: "Here, old man, is a pipe." "What is it for?" asked Bull Lodge. "I want you to break up this storm," Horse Capture replied. "We don't want a storm when we start on our doings." "Well," said Bull Lodge, as he took the pipe, "That is easy." The storm was then coming pretty close. Bull Lodge did nothing but smoke the pipe, and when through smoking handed it back to Horse Capture, saying: "There is not going to be a drop of rain and you are not going to have any rain for four days." And just at this instant, the thundercloud split in two and went around, by-passing the camp. Whether Bull Lodge averted this storm by reason of his keeper or ex-keeper powers or of special personal ones is not however clear from our informant on the incident, Thick.

Charles Buckman gave us another illustration of Bull Lodge's power over storms, a power associated with the keepership. The story was told Buckman by his present wife's father, old Spotted Bird. There was a very severe and prolonged rain storm, it was cold, and the horses were dying. The Gros Ventres were camped with the Crow. The Crow offered Bull Lodge a pipe to stop the storm and he agreed: "All right, I will see what I can do." So he got his Feathered Pipe drum, fixed a smudge, and started to sing a certain song, saying: "After I sing the third song, go and see how the weather looks." So they began singing and by the time he sang the fourth song, the storm was over and the sun was shining. [648]

When a big thunderstorm came, or too much rain, the people would appeal to the keeper to stop it. He would make a smudge and talk to the Pipe and, without mentioning the Last Child or the sun, ask that the storm or rain cease, and it would stop. The smudging consisted of or included taking a pinch of sweet pine, motioning with it, dropping all but a little of it in the fire, and putting this remaining bit on the top of his head. The weather

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789 song had also to be sung, apparently to the accompaniment of the drum.

755 Putting sweet pine needles on the sick person's head, blowing wild parsley on him, and smudging him as doctoring practices have been previously described. According to Singer, if some one were so sick that his life was despaired of, the keeper would take the Feathered Pipe [the bundle, probably] and lay it on him and pray over him, and the sick person would recover, and, she added, "it cured a lot of them." Doctoring power was regularly acquired by reason of acquiring the keepership.

793 302 The keeper and co-keeper painted their own faces every morning after breakfast, like the men, in two bands, but broader ones three or four fingers wide, one on the forehead near the hair line and the other from one jaw across the chin to the other jaw.

778 The Pipe bundle was smudged by the keeper every morning and evening with sweet pine needles. During Curly Head's keepership Cora Chandler and her children were kept busy collecting dried cow dung for the daily smudging ceremony. The keeper made it a practice to "talk" or pray often to the Pipe in his lodge. According to The Boy, the keeper was fearful lest otherwise he might make ritual mistakes, at which the Pipe would be angry. According to Al Chandler, the Pipe being jealous, the keeper "had to talk to it to let it know it was not forgotten or put away; he treated it just like a person."

788 778 Customary observances on the occasions of feasts or ordinary meals to guests in the keeper's lodge have been previously described.

When the keeper and the people were camped for any length of time in a given place, the Feathered Pipe bundle was ordinarily taken in the morning from its place of honor opposite the entrance inside the keeper's lodge, hung up outside over the entrance, and brought back inside at eventide.

[361 624] 778 484 When the camp was to be moved, the Feathered Pipe keeper, like the Flat Pipe keeper, had, it seems, a consultative voice in the decision and perhaps even veto power at times, although ordinarily the final decision was made by the head men. The decision once made, early in the morning when camp was to be broken, the Feathered Pipe bundle was hung out on its tripod back of the

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the council told them to do. Before the Dance actually started, the participant age-group split up into two divisions, the "talls" and the "shorts," probably organized as in the Sacrifice Dance but we did not obtain details, except that the "talls" and "shorts" each selected a "tall" and a "short" old man respectively to be older brother to them and assistant to the above-mentioned chief crier. The two groups competed and on one occasion in connection with a Crazy Dance indulged in a contest of supernatural power, according to the following story narrated by The Boy.

"On one occasion, while preparing for a Crazy Dance, the 'talls' and 'shorts' besides engaging in games and sports against one another, played a game of magic, of exhibition of power. They put up a double lodge, like the one used in the Flat Pipe transfer rite, and started in to show their power, the 'talls' were against the 'shorts.' The contest went on and on, and a big crowd of spectators was attracted. The 'shorts' were losing and got mad. One of the 'shorts' made a snake, and it crawled around. At this the 'shorts' all cheered for their side, and said: 'You "talls" can't match that.' But the 'shorts' did not reckon with their opponents. 'All right,' said the 'talls,' 'We'll show you.'

"One of the 'talls' then stepped out in the middle. He used to wear in his hair a piece of rawhide cut out in the figure of an elk. He said to his comrades, 'Sing this song,' and he taught them a song to sing. Then he said: 'I'll lie down. You cover me up with a robe. Continue singing, and after a while uncover me. After everybody has seen what you uncover, cover me up again. Then sing again, and after a while uncover me again.' They proceeded to do as he told them. Meanwhile news of the making of the snake by the 'short' had traveled fast, and some of the principal men of the tribe had come over to the double lodge.

"The 'tall' then lay down and his comrades covered him, sang a while and uncovered him. When they lifted the cover, there sat an elk. The 'talls' cheered loudly. Then they covered him, sang a while, and uncovered him, and he got up smiling.

"But the 'shorts' said: 'That's nothing. We too can do things like that.' So one of the 'shorts' did just as the 'tall' had done. He told his comrade to sing a certain song, cover him, sing, un-

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cover him and so forth. This they did. When they uncovered him, there lay a human skeleton. They then covered, sang, and uncovered, and there was the 'short' himself. And all the 'shorts' cheered and shouted.

"At this point the principal men present stepped in: 'There is danger in this kind of contest. After a while there may be a fight.' So the contest came to an end.

"The Gros Ventres talked for a long time about this contest, and they still talk about it and wonder what would have happened if the principal men had not stepped in and stopped it."

The Crazy Dancers had to be, or by age or custom were, younger men, married or unmarried, fully adult but not yet middle-aged, "mature." They chose their ceremonial grandfathers from among those who had previously been through the Dance. From one to four,—but not more than four,—dancers could choose the same ceremonial grandfather, lest they should run out of grandfathers. Only those could be grandfathers who had never had sex relations with the wives or substitute women joining the dance with the respective grandson or group of two to four grandsons, and an actual shortage of grandfathers meeting this requirement was apt to be more than a theoretic one, at least in the later days when the Dance was given. In one case, in fact, still well remembered, the prospective Crazy Dancer had to hunt all over the tribe to get his ceremonial grandfather. According to Coming Daylight a man who joined the Crazy Dance a second time had to have the same grandfather whom he had had on the first occasion. Where two to four men combined to choose the same grandfather, one of one group served as a sort of leader for it. Apparently if the age-group putting on the dance belonged to the Stars, the grandfathers and grandfathers' helpers were chosen from the Wolves, and vice versa.

There was great reluctance on the part of older men to serve as Crazy Dance grandfathers, although, to judge from the previously quoted remarks of some of the younger men, there were probably exceptions to this rule. The reluctance shown was real, not make-believe, as the older men approached to be grandfathers might have to make embarrassing confessions and refuse, or if they accepted had to undergo a severe test of character, failure in which entailed grave penalty, as will be explained infra.

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778 821 smudged the shield and hung it up on the pole, then he got his Feather Pipe drum and started to sing. As he sang the third time, and of course prayed and went through the [ritual] motions, and a sun ray showed right on the shield. The Crows were in the lodge and they all saw this and they prayed. And he said: 'I have one more song.' So he sang the fourth one and after he got through he said to one of the men: 'You go out and see what has happened.' The man went out and it was still snowing but right in the heavens was a little round hole [clear spot] which gradually enlarged and the sun shone. That is how Bull Lodge cleared the weather."

789 We now come to use of powers of legerdemain. Such powers were ordinarily looked upon as "supernatural" in origin and nature. We have already given many illustrations of such legerdemain as integral elements in ritual power-use, we shall now give the illustrations of it as used in purely or predominantly secular contexts.

Such feats are attributed to various individuals. According to Mary Ereaux, Sits-in-the-Midddle on one occasion when the party was out of tea, "made tea for them and they thought that was great." An unnamed medicine man was reputed to be able to swallow a "chunk of coal" [probably hot embers].

The two most outstanding masters of legerdemain known to our informants were Bull Lodge (d. ca. 1886) and Stiffarm (d. ca. 1935). According to Al Chandler, Stiffarm got his legerdemain power from Bull Lodge, and actually his feats and procedures (such as use of a handkerchief) duplicate almost exactly Bull Lodge's so far as they go.

Here follows our fullest account of Bull Lodge's feats, as given us by his daughter, Garter Snake, with some details interpolated in parentheses, from Charles Buckman (CB) and Al Chandler (AC).

"When my father slept at Baldy [Baldy Butte, in the Bear Paws] . . . he was given the power of doctoring, and he was given wealth, and the power then to make tobacco, matches, sugar, tea, and even coffee. These are the articles he made. In winter time his sons would go out and get cherry brush. He would put

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that black cloth over it four times and then he would say: 'Take the rag off. There will be ripe cherries.' 789

("I heard stories about Bull Lodge. A storekeeper invited Bull Lodge one day in the dead of winter and said to him: 'I invite you for one purpose, I will give you tobacco, tea, sugar, blanket and so forth, but I want you to do something for me.' Bull Lodge said: 'If I can, I will. If I cannot, I cannot. If you ask me for something impossible, I won't be able to accommodate you.' The storekeeper said: 'All right, I am hungry for fresh cherries.' Bull Lodge laughed and said: 'I guess I can. You go out and bring me a cherry branch.' So he went out and got it and Bull Lodge said: 'All right, my friend, set it right there.' He then took that black handkerchief and covered this branch with it and talked and sang to himself and made motions and said: 'All right.' And he took it off and there were cherries!" CB)

(Little Man, my adopted father, once went with Bull Lodge to a store at Chinook. They were hard up that winter and wanted sugar, lard and so forth. He said to Bull Lodge: 'Let's go over to that storekeeper and get something out of him.' So Bull Lodge said: 'Yes, that is right. Let's go.' So they went and sure enough this fellow knew them well and they sat round a while and pretty soon he said to Bull Lodge: 'I am sure hungry for cherries.' Bull Lodge said: 'I won't make them for nothing.' The man said: 'Help yourself. Anything you want.' So Bull Lodge told Little Man to get the brush, a big bundle of it. So Bull Lodge sat down on the floor and did as I just described. So they were smoking and in the meantime Bull Lodge whistled the tune and said to the storekeeper: 'John, go get your cherries.' The man said: 'What do you want me to do?' He raised the handkerchief and his eyes almost popped out. Bull Lodge told him to take them and the storekeeper acted like he was afraid. He made Bull Lodge and Little Man eat some of them first. Bull Lodge," Al added, "was a goodhearted man who helped the poor and all that." AC)

("Bull Lodge could make fresh chokeberries for you in winter time. You would ask him: 'Could you make me some cherries? I am hungry for cherries.' He would say: 'Yes.' Then you would go get branches that were frozen and with no leaves on them and bring them to where he was. He would take them and rub his

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789 hand maybe four or several times and put them down about four feet from him. He always wore a black silk handkerchief and he would put this over the branches. He would then tell you: 'All right, make smoke and talk.' He would hum a song under his breath when he wasn't talking. You would smoke three or four times and he would say to you: 'All right. Get your cherries.'

("You know that in those days the whites used to make plug tobacco, either chewing or smoking tobacco. And that is what Bull Lodge used to make. He would go out and get a cutting of thick wood bark and whittle it to the size of a plug of tobacco and then he would make a smudge and smudge it four times and put it on his tobacco board. He would then spread over it the black handkerchief and light his pipe and blew on the handkerchief four times with one smoke. He would then take the handkerchief away and there would be tobacco."

("The same winter that Bull Lodge made the cherries, Little Man said to him: 'This is a poor winter, nobody has any tobacco. I have been all over but nobody has any, not even the store.' So Little Man told Bull Lodge he should make some: 'All right. Go out and get some cottonwood bark, [to make] whatever amount of tobacco you want.' So Little Man got the thickest piece he could find, of pretty good size. So Bull Lodge started to whittle it, cutting it like [a plug of] tobacco. After he had it all trimmed up he sized it up. It was about two fingers thick, three fingers broad, and two feet long. After he had whittled it all in shape, he put it at a distance of four feet from him and placed one handkerchief over it. They did not have any smoke, so they just talked while Bull Lodge hummed a tune on the sly. After a while, Bull Lodge said: 'Get your tobacco.' And there it was, Chinax tobacco, bags and everything. Little Man gave Bull Lodge some of it and divided it with his neighbor and then they all had a big smoke." AC)

"When Bull Lodge made matches, he would send kids to get him fall rye grass in a bunch. They would bring it and break it to the size of matches. Then he would tie these together with sinew. After this would make a smudge and sing and pray to himself and make a pass in the smudge four times. Then he would take these sticks and tap them in ashes four times, and when he

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was through he had those 'telegraph' matches. Everything was done openly [apparently without use of the handkerchief]." ("Bull Lodge could make candles out of rye grass, and this power and the power to make tobacco too, he gave to Stiffarm." AC) 789

"When Bull Lodge made sugar, sugar was high-priced and scarce. One day he asked his wife to make soup and she told him: 'We haven't any sugar.' He said: 'I will get some.' She asked him: 'Where will you get it?' He said: 'Never mind where I am going to get it. I'll get it.' So he got up and took down that bag that belongs to his Pipe and also a wooden bowl, made smudge twice face up and twice face down (sic), but did not put anything in the bowl. He just set that thing down, put that black handkerchief over it, took the pipe and smoked and blew smoke towards it four times, and the fourth time he blew smoke he took that cloth off and there was white sugar.

"Bull Lodge could take any kind of dish and smudge it and set it on the ground and he would cover it with this black handkerchief, and in this case [when he made green coffee berries] he was talking and making signs and the fourth time he came down and removed the handkerchief, and there were berries. 'In telling all this,' Garter Snake, now a practical Catholic, interpolated, 'I have been telling you what my father told me about himself and in addition what I have seen him do. May the Lord have mercy on my soul!'

"One year in the spring when there were still snowbanks on the hillside, he told one of his sons: 'Go get me a ball of snow.' I did not know what he was going to do with the snow. So the boy rode horseback and brought back a ball of snow and said: 'Here is your snow, whatever you are going to do with it?' My father, after he got the snow, made a smudge and smudged his hands four times, flattened the snow with the palms of his hands, kind of made signs over it and talked. After that he put the black handkerchief over his hand and worked the other hand, rubbing it, and took the handkerchief off, and there was one of those pretty sea-shells, and he gave it to one of the boys.

"This is about hail. Bull Lodge took that wooden bowl and made a smudge and did [sic] with his hands and inhaled the smudge with his mouth four times and smudged his arms four times. He

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●789 then told his wife to put the bowl under his mouth, and he grabbed himself by the waist and shook himself, and out of his mouth came hail and filled the bowl."

Information on Stiffarm's feats was given us by The Boy, a close friend of Stiffarm, and was corroborated in part by Al Chandler.

"Stiffarm," said The Boy, "used to make needles out of blades of grass, tobacco out of bark of trees, and candles out of pigweeds, the stems of which are hollow." "Stiffarm could take a blade of grass, break it in two, and strike it like a match. . . . I saw him turn sand into brown sugar. . . . Once at the old Agency south of Chinook, he visited our home. My mother gave him something to eat but he said: 'Get a half cup full of sand.' She did, and brought it in. Stiffarm said: 'Give it to me.' She did. He had on a black muffler. He untied it, folded it in a narrow strip, and put it on his lap. Then he poured the sand along the muffler and covered the sand with the flaps of the muffler. On his hat he had a yellow painted down feather. He untied the feather and passed it over his mouth horizontally four times, then horizontally over the sand four times. Then he said to my mother: 'Use this to sweeten your tea.' She unfolded the muffler and there in it was brown sugar."

Some who had gambling power were also skillful at legerdemain. According to The Boy, in the course of a hand game, such a one would make an object "go in his hands, through the veins of his arm and come out somewhere else, or go through his skull and come out of his mouth . . . or he swallowed it and drew it out of his body . . . or he blew it to nothing." Red Whip (d. 1912) in a game played about 1873-75 between some Gros Ventres and Flathead, took a button, threw it in the air, and challenged the Flathead champion, Crazy Child, to find it. Crazy Child failed to locate it. Then Red Whip showed him the button embedded in one of the lodge poles and told him to pull it out. Crazy Child tried to do so but without success. Then Red Whip pulled it out easily.[28]

Contests between possessors of legerdemain power sometimes occurred, although it would seem, not often nor at any set times. The Boy told the following story of Stiffarm:

[28] See Flannery and Cooper, 1946, 108-09.

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"Stiffarm used to be accused of doing harm to people through his power. He would never defend himself or say anything about this. On one occasion a group were drinking whiskey and some of Stiffarm's brothers-in-law were there. Brothers-in-law joke [banter] each other. They said: 'Let's have a contest of power. The one who has the least power will buy the drinks.' But Stiffarm said: 'No. I'd rather not.' The others thought Stiffarm was a little scared. They insisted. Finally Stiffarm said: 'All right.' So he took a piece of otter skin in his fingers, held it up, sang four times, and blew on it four times. The fourth time, he blew hard and the piece of otter skin disappeared. Then he said: 'Where is that otter skin? Look for it.' They could not find it. Then Stiffarm got up, walked to the iron stove in the middle of the room, and there was the otter skin half buried in the side of the stove. Stiffarm said: 'Here it is. Come and get it.' But no one dared to do so. They were all afraid. Stiffarm then took it without effort, and said: 'Now, the Gros Ventres have blamed me for causing some deaths by using my power. That is not true. But if I really wanted to do so, I would use this otter skin, and the one I used it on would not live long.'"

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A doctor with power to harm might use it if he were "jealous of someone better at medicine than himself," or if he "didn't like someone," or if "a woman refused to live with him."

We got very little information, and this from only two informants, The Boy and Thomas Main, on how and from whom power to do evil was obtained. According to Thomas Main "bad medicine could be acquired sleeping up on the hills, and was used to do evil." The Boy gave a few more details. "Most of the time power to do evil was gotten by fasting and sleeping on the hills and mountains. It was gotten from some animal or other creature. The animal would teach the recipient how to exercise the power and would also tell him: 'If anyone makes you mad and does not respect you, do so and so and harm him.' It was hard to tell who had evil power, until they exercised it." In at least some cases, then, power to harm was given the recipient of other power, as in the case of keepers and co-keepers of sacred Pipes (cf. pp. 52, 60-61), to enforce respect for the recipient. Whether power to harm was always given for this purpose incidentally to the giving of other power, we were not sure. If we assume that this was not the case, and if sheer power to bewitch could be gotten independently, a logical conflict with the fundamental Gros Ventre conception of supernatural power emerges. For all power was conceived as coming ultimately from the benevolent Supreme Being (cf. supra, pp. 5, 7). We do not, however, press the point. While the Gros Ventre magico-religious belief system was a remarkably consistent one, especially as described by The Boy, one hundred per cent consistency is another matter. After all, gifts of power, even though ultimately from the Supreme Being, were gifts with a string, namely, shortened life to the recipients. The Supreme Being preferred prayer to power-quest (supra, pp. 264-266). The problem is here presented and discussed; it has not been solved by us.

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Most doctors had to have some mastery of legerdemain. In the everyday exercise of their curing powers an integral feature, for example, was extracting from the patient's body the object that was causing the disease. Some doctors, in addition, quite independently of their medical practice, had special abilities of clair-

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789 voyance and prophecy, and particularly of wonder working, such as making sugar from sand, matches from grass, and so forth. Some feats of legerdemain, integral and non-integral to curing procedures, have been described in detail. While skill at legerdemain was possessed, as we have seen, by individuals with ancestral helpers, by at least one famous gambler, and probably by other non-medical men, it was especially common among professional doctors. It was, in most cases and by most of the laity believed to be a supernatural gift and, of course, served to give corroborative evidence to the laity of the genuineness of the curing powers of the practitioner, to enhance his (or her) prestige, and to keep and extend his clientele.

### Exercise of Powers

756 Each doctor in curing practice used his or her own distinctive rites. Certain rites and observances however were commonly followed by many or all doctors. These more common rites and observances will be described first, after that, some examples of distinctive ones.

The ordinary procedure to engage the services of a doctor for a given case was to go to him (or her) and offer him a pipe filled with tobacco or tobacco mixture. Acceptance and smoking of the pipe by the doctor,—and in accord with the general Gros Ventre pattern, the request with offer of a pipe could hardly be refused,—meant that he agreed to take the case. Sometimes just tobacco was sent or brought to him. In certain instances, too, where petitioner and doctor were related the pipe offering could be dispensed with. Thus in view of their relationship, Al Chandler related that he asked his adoptive father, Little Man, on a given occasion to accept a case without the pipe offering. "I did not have to have a pipe. My father would do anything for me, pipe or no pipe."

"It was important," The Boy explained, "how you handed the pipe to the doctor before calling him. Before approaching him, you would ask around: 'How do you hand the pipe to so-and-so?' A number of doctors might have the same way, but not all had. If no one knew [for a given doctor], then you would ask the doctor

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'Little Man,' had been bewitched and cured, he fell sick again. A man was called in to doctor him. He did his medicine work and drew out a small rattlesnake with shining eyes from Little Man's forehead. Meanwhile I had built a fire. I asked the man to let me look at that snake and he told me: 'When you have finished, hand it back to me.' But I threw it in the fire. He did not say anything but gathered up his medicines, jammed them in his bag, and went out. He took the mare given in payment and gave it away at once to another person. . . . Little Man did not know what to make of my action. I told him: 'I burned up his old rotten medicine.'

"I know I could not escape death [some time] so I was not afraid of him (the man). Some others would be scared of a medicine man like him, but not I. He did not put medicine on me. He was my neighbor, however, and after that he avoided me like he was ashamed. . . . Little Man really had kidney trouble and that man fooled around his head!"

"Stiffarm," Coming Daylight also said, "had some power concerning children, for he wore a bracelet from which hung little dolls, one on each side thereof. . . . My husband, Little Man, used to make fun of Stiffarm for wearing this bracelet, but he would never tease him outright [in his presence]. After Stiffarm would leave, Little Man would say: 'What is that crazy thing doing with such a bracelet?' "

Bull Lodge, Garter Snake's father, a great medicine man, who died about 1886, had gotten power to cure various ailments. From Garter Snake were obtained some details, many of them confirmed independently by The Boy, of the ritual procedures used by Bull Lodge. His chief operating instrument was a woodpecker feather.

"Now I will tell how my father doctored," Garter Snake volunteered. "On one occasion his granddaughter was ill and called him. His wife and I went along with him. On our arrival this granddaughter said: 'Grandfather, I would make coffee for you but I haven't any sugar.' But he got mad and said: 'Everytime you ask me here you ask me to make sugar. I am tired of this. If you had the power I have, would you like to be making it all the time?' Well, instead of quitting asking, she took a pack (?) and threw it to him and said: 'make that sugar.' So he went through

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the performance, and they had sweet coffee. And after we ate and smoked, we went back home.

"Sometime during that night the woman [Bull Lodge's granddaughter] had an attack of some kind of sickness and blood just poured out from underneath. Her sister ran [to our lodge] and said [to Bull Lodge]: 'Grandfather, your granddaughter is having an awful hemorrhage. If you think a lot of your children I pray that you will come, and if you love Garter Snake, your daughter, I pray in her name that you come.' And the old man said: 'All right. I am coming. Run home and get her ready. I will be there. I will do what I can.'

"So I and my mother and father went, and one of the boys, Curly Head, went along too. And of course the sick woman's children were in there [her lodge].

"The old man got there and felt around and said: 'Oh there is a big lump in there that busted your blood. Instead of cutting you open I am going to work it the other way. I will give you the medicine I use to help a woman in labor. I will work it off that way. I don't know what it is but it is a big lump.' So he told his wife: 'Take that frying pan, heat water quick.' So she did. He put three or four kinds of medicine in this water and told her: 'Boil it quick.' Of course it didn't take long, and he said: 'Take two cups [of the infusion] and put it in there and cool it quick, so she can drink it.'

"They did this, and after the medicine was cool enough, the patient's husband raised her up so she could drink this medicine. She took it, and Bull Lodge said: 'All right. Just hold her up like that.' Bull Lodge took the black handkerchief [another ritual object he used in curing] and balled it up, prayed and sang, and put it right on top of the patient's head and shook it back and forth quick, and when he did that, she said: 'Grandfather, something dropped.'

"When she said that, he lifted her to another place, and here [where she had been] was what looked like a rock, as big as a man's fist and it was blue. What it was I do not know, but that it was what this woman had in her and it must have busted that blood. The blood was just running all over. The blood was still coming, and Bull Lodge said: "Well, I will have to heal that

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## CHAPTER VIII

## MISCELLANEOUS PRIVATE RITES AND OBSERVANCES

782 789 Besides the ancestral-helper and power rites and observances, there were a great many other private ones,—private in the sense that they were mostly carried out by lone individuals or by small and often exclusive groups. Most of these other private rites and observances expressed, by word and/or act, either petition or gratitude or both to supernatural beings, and hence most were, in the sense in which we are using the term, "religious" rather than "magical." A smaller proportion of them were of the "magical" order, being concerned exclusively with purely impersonal forces or phenomena. In some cases both "religious" and "magical" concepts and attitudes appear to be present; in most cases, either the former or the latter are exclusively present or at least clearly predominant; in a few cases, it is hard to say whether, from the Gros Ventre point of view, we are dealing with the "religious" or the "magical."

In our field work among other Algonquian peoples we have often found that phenomena, which at first looked "magical," turned out later, on deeper penetration into meaning, to be clearly "religious." We suspect that some of the phenomena to be described in the present section as seemingly "magical" would likewise, with fuller knowledge, turn out to be "religious."

That certain given rites and observances may have a dominantly or exclusively "religious" or "magical" coloring undoubtedly depends on different meanings attached to them by different individuals. For instance, The Boy has a more philosophic mind; he seeks unity, systematization, synthesis, meaning; Singer was more pragmatic in her attitude to the supernatural, and little concerned with synthesis and meaning. In more cases than one, what was religious to The Boy may well have been "magical" to Singer. So at least we strongly suspect, although conclusive evidence for our inference cannot be adduced. We may merely add that in our own

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Occidental culture, what some individuals conceive and practice as "religious" is not infrequently conceived and practiced by others as "magical."

Apart however from all such questions and qualifications, by far the greater proportion of the miscellaneous private rites and observances, to the detailed description of which we now turn, are exclusively or predominantly "religious" rather than "magical." We shall take up in order: wish (or wish-thought), prayer, sacrifice, vows, oaths, dreams and visions, omens, divination, taboos. In general, under the first half dozen captions we shall be dealing more with "religious" phenomena, in the remainder more with "magical" ones, but there are certain overlaps and combinations of the two which will be apparent as we go along.

## Wish and Thought: Blessing and Curse

That the Gros Ventres believed in the efficacy, more or less "supernatural," of certain wishes and thoughts about others, of benevolent and malevolent thinking, of—in this sense—blessings and curses, is clear. Exactly how the good or evil wish or thought wrought its effects is not too clear from our field data.

The Gros Ventres in general attach great significance to thought and wish. This theme recurs over and over again in their culture. Here are some illustrations. One of the names of the Supreme Being apparently meant: He who rules all by the power of thought. Some medicine men had special power to harm and kill by sheer wish. The Boy, in discussing the question, "Who among the beings, apart from the Supreme Being, known to the Gros Ventres was the most powerful?" finally narrowed his choice down to two, a certain boy and his sister as the most powerful of all. "The boy had power to do things with his eyes. He would only look and the thing happened as he wished, but that was only in combination with his sister. She would do the thinking and then he would do the looking," and the thing would happen, especially as a result of the girl's thinking.[1] The Boy thought long and intensively

[1] See Kroeber, 1907, No. 26, The Deserted Children, especially pp. 104-05. This may be the myth to which The Boy referred. Unfortunately we did not get a complete version from him.

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787 to do so they did not do it. They peered one by one. If the scryer, on peering into the surface of the blood, saw himself headless or scalped, this meant he would get killed, and he would not go on the expedition but would turn back and go home. If he saw himself reflected clearly, this meant good luck. "Usually," said Thomas Main, "the scryers did not tell what they saw." "It was claimed," Charles Buckman remarked, "that the skeptic [one who saw himself scalped or headless, but nevertheless continued on the expedition] actually got killed."

Bear heart divination was described by The Boy, Charles Buckman, and Coming Daylight as a well-known practice.[18] Apparently badger blood divination was taken much more gravely and seriously by the Gros Ventres than bear heart divination.

A final type of divination is from Coming Daylight. The grandson of her old grandmother with whom, as a girl, she and her sister were living, killed a female porcupine in which were two embryos. "The old woman said to us two girls: 'Come here both of you.' So she held my dress open at the neck and loosened my belt, and threw the foetus down the neck of my dress. It went through without stopping, and my grandmother said: 'When you have children you will have an easy time. See how quick it went through.' Then she did the same to my sister, but in some way the foetus got caught, and the old woman said: 'Now, you see. You are going to have a hard time. You are going to have slow childbirth.' And sure enough, these are the ways it turned out for us [respectively]."

### Things to Do and to Avoid Doing

784 789 Under this somewhat loose caption we are grouping certain acts done in order to bring about desirable effect or avoided lest undesirable ones follow. How far they were in Gross Ventre thought considered "supernatural" it is hard to say. Most of these observances and avoidances were seemingly viewed as of the non-sacred work-a-day order. At least, in most of them there appears to have been no explicit or even implicit appeal to a supernatural being or resort to supernatural power. The few in which a suggestion of

[18] Cf. Flannery, 1953, p. 163.

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supernatural power is present would, in so far, be positive "magical" practices, or else negative ones, "taboo" proper. The great number of such observances and avoidances, treated elsewhere—are here omitted or else touched upon only summarily. We shall list first acts done, and after that acts avoided.

To bring cold or a cold wind in winter time, a bull-roarer was whirled, or a buzzer, made of a dew claw with two holes in it, on a string, was revolved. Children were not allowed to use the buzzer. Plucking a bird to bring a north wind was not known to informants.

As soon as the first thunder of spring is heard, blow on any warts you have and they will come off.

The Gros Ventres, when aware someone was trying to bewitch or poison them or when they were going to visit another tribe, especially the Cree, would rub themselves with sweet pine needles and these would make them proof against witchcraft, poison, or other harm.

The shoulder-blade of an unborn buffalo-calf was hung up "so that buffalo would continue to exist."

Many acts were to be avoided lest undesirable consequences should follow.

If you touch a mole, a rash like poison ivy will result. The widespread belief among northeastern Algonquians that seeing a dead mole brings bad luck is however, lacking. If you touch a toad, you will get warts [European influence?] If a spider is killed, rain comes.

Do not eat the meat of the rare albino buffalo, else your hair will turn white. Children should not eat buffalo testicle, raw or cooked, lest they wet the bed; infants not yet able to talk should not eat puppy meat, lest they be a long time learning to talk. Young women of childbearing age should not eat the two strips of flesh, called the "twins," running along the backbone [tenderloins], lest they have twins, nor the colon of buffalo, for the same reason.

Horses should never be abused: such was the caution given to the founder of the Drum Dance by the drum men leader when the latter presented him with the stallion and other horses.

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784 Sex abstinence was generally observed before hunting, and par-
● 789 ticularly before and all during golden eagle trapping. Eagle
[834] trappers "had to have a special religious character, to observe certain food taboos, and a special way of handling [being handed?] a pipe." The leader of a war party, but not other members thereof, also observed sex abstinence.

Do not break leg bones or ribs to extract the marrow or for other purpose, inside the lodge or house; go outside to do it, else you will get sore legs, or your horses may break their legs. Cora Chandler stated in 1940 that she still observed this latter, as her folks had always made her do. If an embryo calf were to be taken out of the belly of a buffalo, the embryo's eyes had to be extracted before it was brought into the lodge to be cooked; if the eyes were taken out inside the lodge, a member of the family would go blind, —"and this has been proven." Likewise it was forbidden to butcher and extract the brains from a buffalo head inside a lodge, and also break off the "soft end" of roast buffalo ribs. "Never use a knife to fuss with ashes or coals because you might cut yourself if you did so."

After blood-letting, the subject abstained from eating anything fried so the cut would not turn blue.

[551] There does not seem to have been any prohibition against mentioning the name of a deceased relative or other person.

777 Coming Daylight and Mary Ereaux had never heard of lucky or
801 unlucky numbers. The Boy, however, stated: "According to the old law, the people were forbidden to use seven. For instance, a war party was not to have seven members, but either more or fewer. Cases are known in which young fellows disobeyed this rule and ran into trouble. In one case of this kind six of the party got killed and only one escaped with his life."

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The wheel game, too, in contrast to the 2-button hand game, was accompanied with no legerdemain and no grace or fancy movements. The players might run or trot in a rather awkward or ridiculous fashion, "awfully funny, like a chicken walking backwards," as one informant put it; but they did not care what the crowd might think of their queer or clumsy gait; they were out to win; they would await some other occasion "to show off handsome." 525 [789]

Likewise, in the wheel game, no prayers to any being were said and there was no resort to supernatural power gotten from prairie chickens or ghosts (see *infra* under hand game). Even if a given wheel-game player had such power, it was of no avail in the wheel game and was not called upon. In the gambling-for-scalps story, to be mentioned presently, the Gros Ventre prayed to the Supreme Being to win, but here there was question not so much of winning material goods as of preserving physical wholeness and life itself, things within the peculiar keeping of the Supreme Being in Gros Ventre theology. [782]

Success in the wheel game depended on two things: skill and what may be called thought-wish power. In the play all effort was concentrated by the players on the utmost exercise of skill and adroitness acquired through long practice and of judgment, in following the rolling wheel and in throwing the pole at just the precise moment and in just the right manner.. But, in at least some of the big wheel games, a sort of thought power or thought-wish power was used by the players. In how far such power can be considered "supernatural" is hard to say; it seems to have been more "natural" than "supernatural," as judged by most definitions of "supernatural." At any rate, it was not a power gained, as most other Gros Ventre supernatural powers were gained, from some being by crying, fasting, and dreaming on mountain tops or along timbered water courses. 525 789

Its efficacy was derived ultimately from the player's previous war exploits. Its exercise was along the following pattern. There being no set time for wheel games, one might get under way any time, with relatively small stakes, and develop in the course of play into a really big game, or the game could be a big one from the start. In such a big game, between outstanding opponents, for large stakes and for status (see *infra*), before starting to roll the wheel, each player would in turn take the wheel in one hand and with the other touch his pole (arrow or stick) under the wheel on a particular bead. While doing so he would think with intense concentration of one of his past war deeds—e.g., a horse he took from the very door of his enemy's lodge at great risk of life—and would say in his mind, silently and not audibly: "I am not telling a lie [about this deed]. The powers know I am not telling a lie." He would rehearse the event in his mind, and probably (the point was not fully cleared up by us) would think of

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525 some object connected with the deed, which was of the same color as the bead
789 he was touching.

This thought-wish was a sort of indirect or implicit oath, not a formal audibly uttered one. If he actually had done no such deed, he could not hope to have good fortune from such intense concentration of thought and wish. But it was not a prayer proper; he was not asking anything directly of any being. The act was called beta´c"et". It may be added here parenthetically that a highly abstract concept of effective power from deeply sincere wish or intense thought or from both combined plays an important part in many phases of Gros Ventre life even today.

While the player was making this silent wish, the spectators would speculate a lot about which of his great war deeds he was thinking. Later the winner would recite publicly the great deed he had been thinking about. In doing so he had to keep scrupulously to the facts, facts well known to the people, for he was looked upon as a man of character and high standing with a reputation gained by merit, sacrifice, and risk of life.

525 If a player were losing, one of his kinsmen, friends, or backers might volunteer to take his place playing, and also (apparently: our field evidence is not fully clear) to use his own war deeds power.

The main gambling at the wheel game was for stakes wagered by the two players themselves, a given piece of property against an equivalent piece for each game of any agreed number, say 10, of counters won. But the spectators, too, often bet on the game, although not so generally, it appears, as they did at the 2-button hand game. The wagers by players or spectators could be small or large. Two given players might keep at play many hours in succession, playing game after game. In some instances the betting between the two players would result in the loss by one of the last bit of his property—horses, blankets, clothing, household utensils, even his lodge itself. A comparatively wealthy man could thus become a "pauper" in a day. Often, too, the relatives of the players would win or lose almost as heavily in backing their respective kinsmen.

554 In some of the big wheel games the "social" stakes were as important as or
525 more important than the property ones, as illustrated in the case of Lame Bull given below. Two prominent men, enemy friends to each other and at the same time rivals for prestige and status in the tribe, would on a given day play the game *à outrance*. The winner's status and prestige would be greatly exalted; the loser's proportionately lowered. A man's whole career of advancement to prominence in the tribe—a basic ambition among Gros Ventre men—could be brought to ruin in a single day's gaming at the wheel game. He might lose not

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the guessing, tally keeper B would take the one counter remaining in the center 525
and also draw one counter from team A's won counters. And so the game went back and forth, one or two hiding at a time according to rule, until one team won all the twelve counters.

A session of hand games might go on for many hours; starting, say, in the morning it might continue throughout the whole day and through the night until the next morning. When any of the players or supporters got hungry, they would go home and eat and then return to the game. After a game in which the twelve counters and stakes were won, and before the next one, there would usually be a little time out for a rest and smoke, and for the placing of bets on the next game.

The atmosphere of the hand game was a holiday one. Raillery was a little rough at times. But for players and spectators, the game was a major source of enjoyment, relaxation, and pleasurable excitement. What with the singing, the drumming, the twitting, the shouting, the often loud and uproarious cheering, the hand game—in rather sharp contrast to the quiet, grave wheel game—was apt to be decidedly noisy, not to say boisterous. Not the least appreciated feature of the hand game was the showmanship, the grace and virtuosity of the players, who played to an appreciative and discriminating house. The victors gloated conspicuously over the losers and bantered them unmercifully, but the losers were expected to keep their tempers, an expectation, however, not always realized.

For success in hand game gambling, most players, it seems clear from our evidence, relied on chance and skill—an occasional one on sleight-of-hand proper—rather than on supernatural power or aid. So far as we could determine, the drumming and singing that accompanied the playing were not of the magico-religious order, at least ordinarily and apart from the exceptional games in which individuals with supernatural power (see *infra*) participated. Certain individuals were, from native keenness or from practice and experience, particularly adept at hiding and guessing, and these were apt to play the role of hiders and guessers for their teammates and backers.

Some few men, however—never women, we were informed—had supernat- 525
ural gambling power. This power might come unsought, as in the case of Keg 789
to be given presently, or, more commonly, was sought. Not many sought it or possessed it. The young were strongly advised against seeking it by their parents and by the tribal counsellors, for the man who sought and obtained it had to pay a heavy penalty. He would be affected with some serious ailment of the limbs, such as pains in and swelling of the joints, and would die before his

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525 789 time. This latter aspect of the belief accorded with the larger Gros Ventre pattern: any acquisition of special supernatural power sought by quest would be apt to lead to shortening of life.

Nevertheless, against the reiterated advice of parents and elders who would so lecture the growing children and of the chiefs and counsellors who would walk around the camp so warning the people, a good many individuals would seek supernatural power, and a few would go out in quest of supernatural gambling power. In some cases such gambling power was sought by a man who had lost heavily or lost his all at the wheel or hand game, as a desperate measure to recoup his losses and to get a new start in his career.

Gambling power was not sought from the Supreme Being, who apparently did not enter at all into the gambling cycle. The appeal to him in the previously given traditional story of gambling for scalps is more a confirmation of than an exception to the rule. Nor was it sought as other power—to be a great warrior or doctor or to acquire wealth or to live long—was sought, by fasting and dreaming on the hill tops. The seeker for gambling power resorted to the brush and timber along watercourses to obtain it from the prairie chickens, [176] or from a ghost. It was more commonly gotten from prairie chickens; but not infrequently from a ghost, not an ancestor of the candidate, at least not necessarily, but, as The Boy put it laughingly, from "any good-natured ghost." This power was gotten for use only in the hand game, not in any other gambling game or sport.

[824] Usually the seeker looked for a place where wild morning glories formed a sort of bower, "like a little lodge or tipi." It was in there that a ghost was believed to live; the morning glory was called tzek'unθänädzu, "ghost rope" (tzek'$^{h}$ or tsä'k'$^{a}$, "ghost"). The seeker would cry and cry, and when he got sleepy he would crawl into the bower and sleep. Pretty soon a ghost or prairie chicken might ask him: "Why are you punishing yourself so much?" He might answer: "Because I have lost all my belongings." "Is that all? Well, I will help you out," the being or beings would say, and then would give the seeker a song and tell him what rules he must live by and how he must act in the hand game. The person who got such power would not afterwards reveal the details told him by the giver. From the prairie chicken or ghost the person might also get at the same time the power to do marvelous things, such as making an object disappear, swallowing it and then drawing it out of some part of his body, making it go into his skull and come out of his mouth into his hand or go through his veins and come out somewhere else on his person, and so forth (cf. Red Whip story *infra*.)

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Gambling power was of a lower order of dignity and solemnity than power obtained by fasting on the mountains and hill tops. It was taken less seriously, more lightly, and, if we may judge from attitudes today, with an undercurrent of amused jocoseness. It was not, as was power gotten on mountains, transferrable by the original possessor to another, or at least it was not transferred. For one reason others did not usually want it, on account of the ailments and shortened life its possession entailed. A man who was known to have such power was further handicapped: his fellow tribesmen would not ordinarily gamble against him and so his opportunities for participation were few, being limited mostly to games played by the Gros Ventre with other tribes. In such intertribal games, however, he would become a popular champion, and would derive therefrom a certain prestige as well as material gains. The possession then of gambling power, while to a certain limited extent an asset to its owner, was in more respects than one a decided liability.

It may be added here that while those who possessed supernatural gambling power are spoken of today by English-speaking Gros Ventre as "professional gamblers," in reality there were no professional gamblers among the Gros Ventre even in the old days, professional, that is, in the sense of making their living or most of their living at gambling.

The following three narratives, related by The Boy, illustrate various aspects of gambling power.

*Narrative 1.* Lone Bear, The Boy's wife's father, had gambling power. While he was still in his prime, his legs started hurting him. To escape the penalty he quit gambling. But in vain. His legs went bad, and he died before his time.

*Narrative 2.* When Lame Bull, The Boy's father, was a young boy about ten years of age he had a friend of about the same age, called Keg, to whom he was much attached. Keg, like other boys of his age, had the daily chore of rising long before daylight and driving out the family horses away from camp to graze. One morning he was awakened very early and was told to drive the horses out. He did so, but when he got out to the grazing ground he decided to steal a few winks lying face down. So he fell asleep, and all at once he started to dream. He dreamed that he saw a big hand game going on with high stakes and one fellow winning everything. Keg looked at this fellow closely and saw it was he, Keg, himself. This man spoke to Keg saying: "Do as you see me doing here. Use my throat as an object [button] to hide."

Then Keg woke up and looked around, and there right near where he lay he saw a covey of prairie chickens doing their mating dance and making a whirring noise with their tails. When he got back he said to Lame Bull: "Let's play and see whether what I dreamed is true. I'll put my helper to the test." Lame Bull tried to guess Keg, but Keg would make a noise like a prairie chicken and thereupon

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525 would switch the button to the other hand without Lame Bull perceiving it, and
789 Lame Bull could not guess him.
539 So as the two grew up, Lame Bull always bet when Keg was playing and won a lot of stuff that way. Keg started gambling from his boyhood and always had luck. After he grew up, however, he did not have many chances to play, because everybody, knowing his power, shied away from gambling against him. But when he did play, he would win. When he was resorting to his power in a game, he would imitate the hissing, swishing noise made by the prairie chickens when they ruffle their tail feathers. The prairie chicken had also given Keg its windpipe to use (apparently as a button) in the hand game, and for it Keg used a little metal spring resembling the windpipe.

525 *Narrative 3.* During the lifetime of Red Whip (d. 1912), the Gros Ventre on
789 one occasion, about 1873-75, met the Flathead where Lewistown (Montana) now is
539 and camped close together. The latter asked the former to gamble at the hand
648 game. So when night came, they all assembled in a big lodge. The Flathead had a great gambler, nicknamed Crazy Child, who had gambling power and had never been beaten by anyone on the west side of the Rockies. Outside the lodge the young men of both tribes were visiting in a friendly fashion together, and the Flathead young men told the Gros Ventre young men: "Don't get into that game. Our man cannot be beaten," and some of the latter on that account refrained from betting. But the Gros Ventre had a man of their own, Red Whip, who had gambling power from a ghost, greater gambling power than Crazy Child had.

So the hand game started, with big stakes wagered on both sides. Neither champion showed his prowess right away; they just let themselves run along easily for a while. At last Red Whip decided to cut loose: "This Flathead makes me mad. He has hand game power. So I'll have to use mine. Give me a piece of weasel skin and I'll stop his power." They gave him a piece and he rubbed off a small bit of it and put it on the ground and knelt on it with one knee.

Crazy Child, whose hand-game helper was the owl, used every trick his helper had taught him, to hide the button and battle Red Whip, but to no avail, for Red Whip's ghost helper was more powerful than Crazy Child's owl helper. Then Red Whip, when his turn came to hide, said to the Gros Ventre, "I have this Flathead beaten and I know his helper, the owl, has abandoned him; so sing good and loud and beat time fast and lively," and to the Flathead, "Watch closely, and I will let you hunt for the button after I have hidden it." Red Whip then put on a big show, exhibited the button to the Flathead, threw it into the air, and told him to look for it. Crazy Child hooted like an owl and did all sorts of other things like an owl, but finally gave up: "I can't find the button," at which the Gros Ventre cheered uproariously. Then Red Whip got up, showed the Flathead the button, which was embedded in the lodge pole to the left of the door as you go out, and asked him to pull it out. Crazy Child tried to pull it out but failed, but Red Whip pulled it out easily, and said to Crazy Child: "You are nothing. You are just a little fellow. You don't amount to much. I didn't have to try hard to beat you. But I just wanted to show you this."

This great game lasted one whole night; daylight was breaking when the two

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men called on their helpers. The Gros Ventres won many things of value: many best horses, guns, and clothes; and no Gros Ventre ever gambled against Red Whip after that.

Men, women, and children could participate in a hand game played by men. All, with an exception or two to be noted, could bet thereon, and men and women could bet on both sides. In a game where the men were players, the women would be present and would join in the singing as well as in the betting, but they could not be guessers, hiders, or tally keepers; only men could be such. Women, however, could so function in hand games among themselves.

Actual participation in hand game gambling was high. One of our women informants, Mrs Warrior, never went in for betting, she emphasized; but she seems to have been rather exceptional in this regard. Our other woman informant on gambling, Mrs Sleeping Bear, was much devoted to gambling, for relatively small stakes. Nearly every one, so far as we could make out from our evidence, seems to have gambled, either frequently and habitually or at least from time to time.

Participation, however, followed a well-defined and established pattern as regards who could or should bet with or against whom and for what kind of stakes. For convenience we are calling this the "bettor-wager pattern."

Some persons or classes of persons could not gamble at all or could not gamble against certain others; others could or would gamble against certain others only for refreshments or a meal; others, for small stakes of little value; others still, for big stakes. The Gros Ventre bettor-wager pattern at first glimpse looks complicated, but actually it conforms to a few very simple principles. We shall look first at the pattern itself; afterwards at the principles.

Blood relatives could not gamble against each other either for large or for small stakes. Such blood relatives included parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts and nephews and nieces, and also all classificatory relatives of the same categories. At most a group of blood relatives might engage in a hand game with the half-serious half-playful agreement that the losing side would "cook" for the winning side. A given gambling team would commonly be composed chiefly of members who were kin to one another, but non-relatives could also be on the team; the opposing team would likewise be commonly composed chiefly of another kinship group. Where blood relatives gambled in the same game for small or large stakes, they always gambled and bet, not against one another, but on the same side, and in wagering they bet on and backed their own kinsman or kinsmen, wagering dyadically against fellow tribesmen or aliens not related to them.